

Message Text

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R 251600Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4204

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0813

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT BANS BLACKS AT PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEETING

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN HEAVY-HANDED NAMMER GOVERNMENT HAS USED ITS ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY TO EXPRESS DISPLEASURE OVER PRESENCE OF BLACKS AT BLOEMFONTEIN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PROGRESSIVE PARTY. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PREPARATION FOR NOVEMBER 22-23 NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PROGRESSIVE PARTY IN BLOEMFONTEIN, PRESIDENT HOTEL APPLIED FOR PERMISSION TO HOUSE AND DISPENSE LIQUOR TO APPROXIMATELY TWENTY SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK OBSERVERS WHO WOULD ATTEND CONGRESS MEETINGS IN HOTEL'S CONFERENCE ROOM. RECENTLY, SUCH REQUESTS HAVE BEEN ROUTINELY APPROVED BY NATIONAL LIQUOR BOARD. HOWEVER, ON THIS OCCASION HOTEL INFORMED DAY BEFORE CONGRESS TO BEGIN THAT PERMISSION DENIED.

3. MINJUSTICE JIMMY KRUGER TOLD PRESS THAT DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN BY ENTIRE SAG CABINET AND WAS MEANT TO EXPRESS DISPLEASURE OVER BLACK AND WHITE POLITICAL "INTERFERENCE" IN EACH OTHER'S AFFAIRS. KRUGER SAID, "THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY ASKED US TO ENDORSE SOMETHING WE DISAPPROVED OF AND, WHEN WE WERE ASKED, UNCLASSIFIED

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WE NATURALLY REFUSED."

4. MOST OF BLACK INVITEES, INCLUDING COLORED LEADER SONNY LEON AND N. SETLOLOGO, BOPHUTHATSWANA MINEDUCATION, STAYED AWAY FROM CONGRESS ON BASIS OF NEWSPAPER REPORTS. G.N. NAIDOO, ELECTED MEMBER OF SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN COUNCIL, ARRIVED AT BLOEMFONTEIN HOTEL 4 A.M. NOVEMBER 22. NAIDOO, WHO WAS UNAWARE OF SAG DECISION, WAS ALLOWED TO CHECK IN BY BLACK DESK CLERK. HE ATTENDED MORNING SESSION OF NOVEMBER 22 CONGRESS.

5. PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S LEGAL ADVISORS ASSERTED THAT GOVERNMENT DECISION COULD ONLY PREVENT BLACKS FROM RESIDING, DINING OR CONSUMING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN HOTEL FACILITIES. COUNSEL FOR HOTEL, WHICH IS PART OF LARGE SOUTHERN SUN CHAIN, PUBLICLY ARGUED THAT BAN APPLIED TO USE OF ALL HOTEL FACILITIES, INCLUDING CONFERENCE ROOMS. THEREFORE, IN HOTEL'S VIEW, NAIDOO COULD NOT ATTEND CONGRESS MEETINGS. PROG OFFICIALS TOLD EMBOFF ATTENDING CONGRESS THAT SOUTHERN SUN EXECUTIVES HAD PRIVATELY EXPRESSED DISATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT DECISION AND AGREEMENT WITH PROG LEGAL ARGUMENTS. HOWEVER, HOTEL CHAIN, WHICH MUST DEPEND UPON GOVERNMENT FOR LIQUOR LICENSES, DID NOT WANT TO FIGHT ISSUE. CONSEQUENTLY, NAIDOO WAS ASKED BY HOTEL MANAGEMENT TO ABANDON PREMISES.

6. PROGRESSIVES MOVED NOV 23 AFTERNOON'S SESSION TO CHURCH HALL WHERE BLACK NEWSPAPER EDITOR PERCY OBOZA ADDRESSED GATHERING ON STATE OF URBAN BLACKS.

7. COMMENT: MEETINGS OF BLACK LEADERS WITH OPPOSITION POLITICIANS NOW ALMOST STANDARD PRACTICE, AS WAS DEMONSTRATED ONLY WEEK BEFORE BLOEMFONTEIN INCIDENT BY MEETING BETWEEN UNITED PARTY AND HOMELAND LEADERS AT JOHANNESBURG AIRPORT'S HOLIDAY INN. GOVERNMENT'S MOVE AGAINST PROGRESSIVE MEETING NOTABLY HEAVY-HANDED AND PARTICULARLY IRONIC AT TIME WHEN VORSTER ACTIVELY SEEKING DIALOGUE WITH BLACK AFRICA.
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